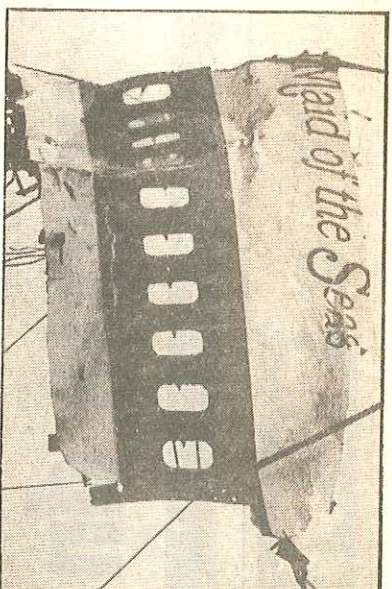


Socialist Worker



DISASTER HITS LOCKERBIE

Who's really to blame

NO ONE knows who planted the bomb which blew apart the Pan Am jumbo jet that crashed into Lockerbie before Christmas.

But it hasn't stopped US President elect George Bush blaming terrorists and threatening retaliation. It hasn't stopped the press crying for revenge.

None of the groups the CIA and the press most suspect have claimed responsibility, however.

Many have specifically denied involvement, and Abu Nidal—"the world's most dangerous terrorist" according to the *Sunday Times*—has sent his condolences to relatives of the victims.

X ray

For a terrorist act to have any rationale it has to gain publicity for the cause in whose name it was organised. In the Pan Am case there is no such rationale.

Amid all the speculation what we do know is that the drive for profit has stopped airlines taking elementary precautions.

The union NUMAST—

representing engineers on long haul aircraft—claims, "There is a conflict between profit and safety." Luggage X-ray equipment at airports lies unused because of the high cost, it says.

The same penny pinching has prevented airlines and

aircraft manufacturers from implementing the recommendation of the inquiry into the Air India 747 that crashed off Ireland three years ago after a bomb exploded in mid-flight.

Terrorist

The report recommended moving the baggage compartment away from the electronic nerve centre of the plane and strengthening the construction of the aircraft to minimise explosive damage.

Staggeringly, no copy of the full report has been seen by the British Civil Aviation Authority, by the International Air Transport Association or by the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Boeing, the makers of 747s, say they are unaware that any such modifications have been made to their planes.

But if the politicians, the press and the airlines have done little about the effects of terrorism, they have done even less about its causes.

In all the thousands of inches of newsprint devoted

to the Lockerbie crash none have raised the question—Why is there terrorism?

To answer it would mean exposing the starvation, famine and destitution wreaked on whole nations by multinational cor-

Suspect no one names

WHILE THE hunting of fictitious bombers goes on, one prime suspect goes unmentioned: Mossad, the Israeli security service. Even in the callous world of espionage, Mossad is a byword for brutality.

It's certainly possible its agents could have had the bomb planted, knowing Arab "terrorists" would get the blame and thus discredit PLO leader Yasser Arafat's new understanding with the White House.

It wouldn't be the first time. In 1986, the Hindawi attempt to plant a bomb on a plane at Heathrow only failed at the last minute. Mossad knew of the plot almost from the beginning.

porations, banks and finance houses.

It would mean an end to the pretence that one part of the world, the imperialist nations who back these multinationals, can be insulated against the anger and frustration that their actions produce.

Israel

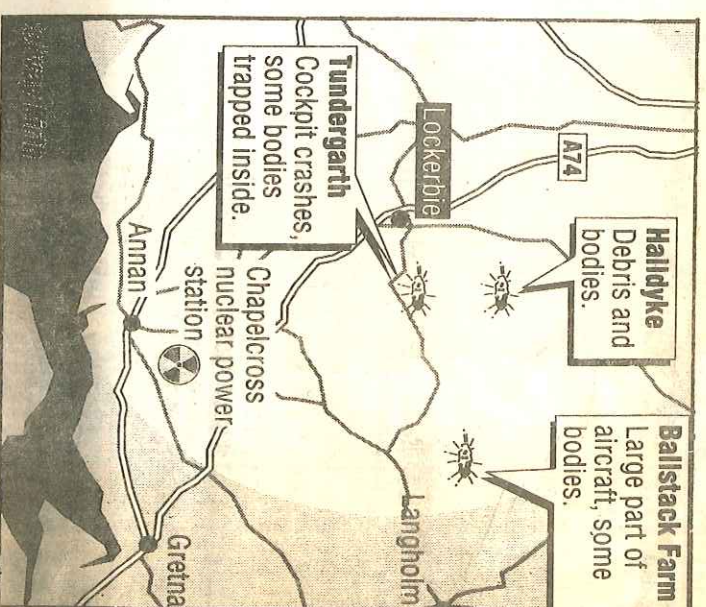
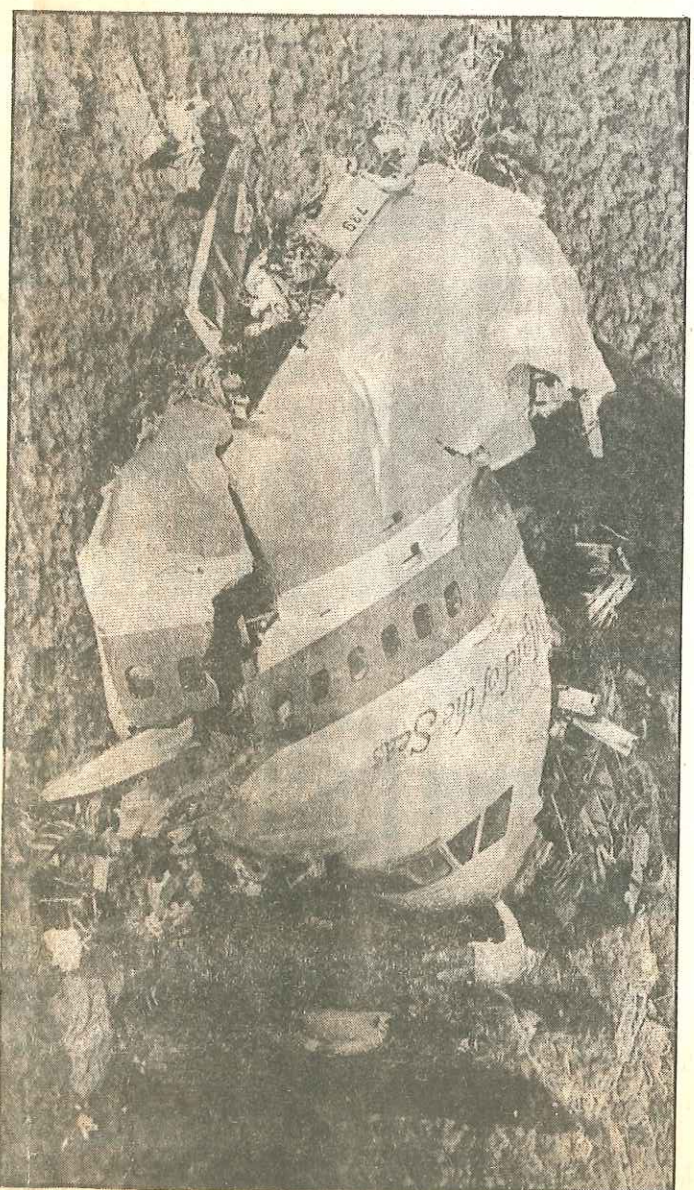
In the Middle East for instance such a question risks unmasking terror on a quite different scale. It risks revealing the attempted annihilation of a whole people—the Palestinians—by the Israeli state, supported by the United States and Britain.

It would mean admitting that, as the death toll in the West Bank and Gaza rises above 300, the daily killings are creating a people deprived of hope.

Some of them will inevitably and desperately hit back at any target.

A real contribution to ending terror would be for the United States to tell Israel to stop bulldozing Palestinian villages and shooting children.

terror?



Air crash posed nuclear threat

THE most dangerous negligence revealed by the Lockerbie disaster has little to do with airline security.

Chapelcross nuclear plant lies just ten miles south of the crash site. The plane's route took it straight over the plant.

If it had hit one of the four military reactors producing weapons grade uranium the disaster could have been of Chernobyl proportions.

Radioactivity could even have been a problem without the plane hitting a nuclear reactor.

If it had caught fire on the ground the heat could have oxidised uranium used in the aircraft's construction, releasing it to be inhaled by people in the area.

In the current issue of the scientific magazine *Nature* Dr Robert Parker claims 250,000 people could be affected in such a disaster.